

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): Process for producing self-extinguishing cables with low-level production of fumes, which comprises:

(a) preparing a flame-retardant composition comprising a polymer base and an inorganic flame-retardant filler, wherein the polymer base and the inorganic flame-retardant filler are mixed at a predetermined temperature for a predetermined time so as to reduce moisture contained in the inorganic flame-retardant filler, and then a dehydrating agent is added to the resulting composition;

(b) extruding said flame-retardant composition on an electrical conductor, which is optionally precoated with an insulating layer, so as to obtain a flame-retardant coating; ~~characterized in that a dehydrating agent is added to said flame-retardant composition.~~

2. (Original): Process according to Claim 1, in which the dehydrating agent is added during phase (a) of preparation of the flame-retardant composition.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the dehydrating agent is added to the flame-retardant composition in divided form.

6. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the dehydrating agent is added to the flame-retardant composition after first being dispersed in a polymer material.

7. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the flame-retardant composition is extruded at a predetermined temperature which depends on the extrusion rate to be obtained.
8. (Original): Process according to Claim 7, in which the flame-retardant composition is extruded at a temperature of between 160°C and 320°C.
9. (Original): Process according to Claim 8, in which the flame-retardant composition is extruded at a temperature of between 200°C and 280°C.
10. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the dehydrating agent is chosen from: calcium oxide, calcium chloride, anhydrous alumina, zeolites, magnesium sulphate, magnesium oxide, barium oxide, and the like, ~~or~~ and mixtures thereof.
11. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 10, in which the dehydrating agent is chosen from: calcium oxide, ~~and~~ zeolites, and ~~or~~ mixtures thereof.
12. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the dehydrating agent is added to the flame-retardant composition in an amount of between 0.5 and 15 % by weight relative to the weight of the flame-retardant filler.
13. (Original): Process according to Claim 12, in which the dehydrating agent is added to the flame-retardant composition in an amount of between 1 and 10 % by weight relative to the weight of the flame-retardant filler.
14. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, in which the flame-retardant filler is chosen from: hydroxides, hydrated oxides, salts, and ~~or~~ hydrated salts of metals.

15. (Currently Amended): Process according to Claim 14, in which the flame-retardant filler is chosen from: magnesium hydroxide, alumina trihydrate, hydrated magnesium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, hydrated calcium and magnesium carbonate, calcium and magnesium carbonate, or and mixtures thereof.

16. (Original): Process according to Claim 15, in which the flame-retardant filler is magnesium hydroxide.

17. (Original): Process according to Claim 15, in which the flame-retardant filler is magnesium hydroxide of natural origin.

18. (Withdrawn): Flame-retardant composition comprising a polymer base and an inorganic flame-retardant filler, characterized in that it also comprises a dehydrating agent.

19. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 18, in which the dehydrating agent is chosen from: calcium oxide, calcium chloride, anhydrous alumina, zeolites, magnesium sulphate, magnesium oxide, barium oxide, and the like, or mixtures thereof.

20. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 19, in which the dehydrating agent is chosen from: calcium oxide and zeolites, or mixtures thereof.

21. (Withdrawn): Composition according to any one of Claims 18 to 20, in which the dehydrating agent is present in an amount of between 0.5 and 15 % by weight relative to the weight of the flame-retardant filler.

22. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 21, in which the dehydrating agent is present in an amount of between 1 and 10 % by weight relative to the weight of the flame-retardant filler.

23. (Withdrawn): Composition according to any one of Claims 18 to 22, in which the flame-retardant filler is chosen from: hydroxides, hydrated oxides, salts or hydrated salts of metals.

24. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 23, in which the flame-retardant filler is chosen from: magnesium hydroxide, alumina trihydrate, hydrated magnesium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, hydrated calcium and magnesium carbonate, calcium and magnesium carbonate, or mixtures thereof.

25. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 24, in which the flame-retardant filler is magnesium hydroxide.

26. (Withdrawn): Composition according to Claim 25, in which the flame-retardant filler is magnesium hydroxide of natural origin.